

Newsletter

SIMONA - NATIONAL EXPERTS ACTIVELY ENDORSING SEDIMENT SAMPLING IN THEIR COUNTRY



After the successfully completed online Training Event (25.3.) on the sediment sampling methods according to the SIMONA Sampling Protocol, it is time for the project partners to apply the gained knowledge and conclusions from the Training, in the field. More specifically, each partner country has formerly chosen its 2 representative sites for sediment sampling according to the agreements made at the SIMONA Workshop in Bulgaria in October 2019 (the criteria used for selection were the SIMONA Output Sampling protocol, ISO 5667 - 12:2017, ISO 5667 - 17:2008, WFD Guidance Document No. 25 and TNMN monitoring sites criteria). For this reason, the SIMONA National Baseline Groups were assembled consisting of the projects and external experts that will actually perform the sediment sampling in their country. Mostly, those are the members of the SIMONA National Experts WG and ASP partners, which were originally planned for this activity, but after the recent Training Event, some new "faces" were introduced. All of the participants of the Training event received the material on sediment sampling (PowerPoint presentations and instructional videos) and the National Baseline Group members additionally received the specific



SIMONA Sampling Guidelines (on sampling safety, design, equipment, and methods) created by the scientific coordinator, to apply directly in the field. For each sediment type, different sampling methods and options were provided. As a first stage, all the collected samples are to be sent to the SIMONA Reference Laboratory for analysis.



In summary, the National Points Sampling Campaign is being actively pursued by almost all partner countries during April and its results of sediment quality from around 25 National Sampling sites, will form the DRB Baseline Monitoring Network. The Network will be additionally harmonized with the formerly completed Test Area results from around 30 sampling sites. More information on the content and meaning of the Network will follow with the implementation of further activities in the upcoming final period of the SIMONA project.

SIMONA - LP GEOZS ACCEPTED FOR PARTICIPATION/POSTER PRESENTATION AT ONLINE EU SEDIMENT CONFERENCES

The SIMONA project LP GEOZS was successfully accepted for the participation and poster presentation at the 2nd International Conference on Contaminated Sediments (ContaSed 2021), which will be hosted by the University of Bern, Switzerland from 9th to 12th June 2021, online. The conference this year will focus on organic and inorganic sediment contaminant classes including microplastics, emerging contaminants, heavy metals and persistent organic pollutants. There will be 5 topics concerning sediment contamination and we will shortly present our SIMONA project in the scope of Topic 3: Analytical tools and methods for assessing sediment contamination.

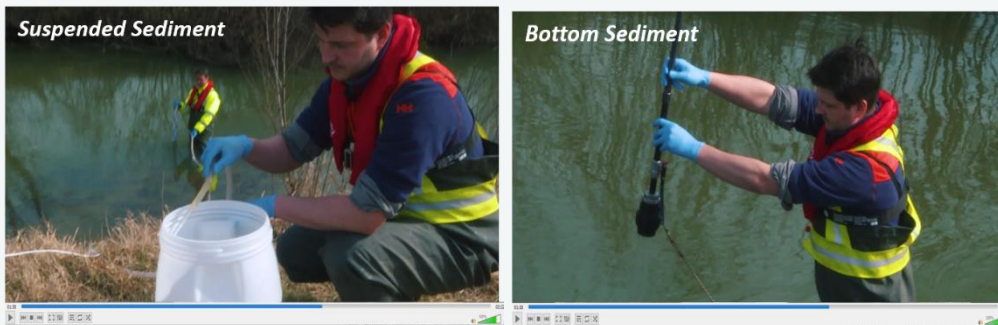
We also applied for participation at the European River Symposium on 26th and 27th May 2021 organised by the European Centre for River restoration, also held online. In general, the lectures of this Symposium will be mainly oriented at the ecological and chemical status

of European rivers and waters, Integrating Policies, EU WFD, Biodiversity Strategy and Green Deal.

SIMONA - CHANGE IN THE SIMONA PARTNERSHIP

As of 1st February 2021, the SIMONA project partner National Agricultural research and Innovative Center (HU-NARIC) has integrated into Szent Istvan University (HU-SZIE). Institutionally changed Szent Istvan University is now called the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences (HU-MATE). With the foundation of MATE, one of the largest agricultural-focused, multi-disciplinary higher education institutions in Europe was established on 1 February 2021. Even though the University has received a new name and a new foundation document, this is only due to the change in the governing organisation. The structural change does not affect in any way the legal rights and obligations constituted by the former Szent István University since these rights and obligations shall be borne by the new University (MATE). For the SIMONA project partnership, this means that no new partner is created and added to the project, but the major administrative change will have to take place once the rules for this case are settled.

SIMONA - 1ST TRAINING EVENT ON SEDIMENT SAMPLING HELD ONLINE



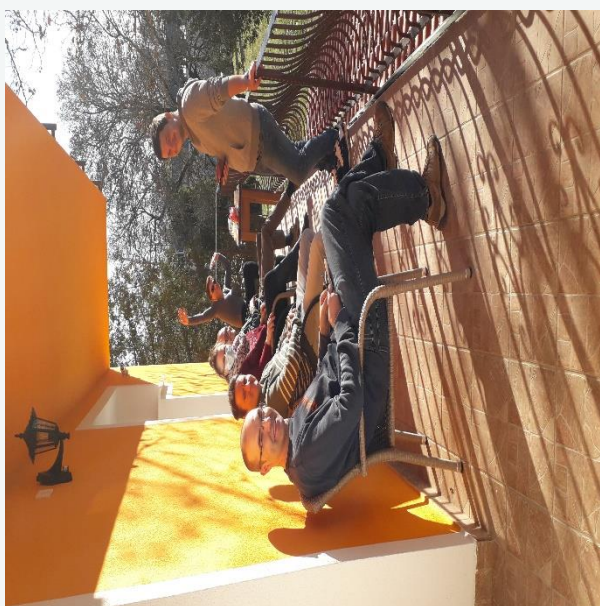
Due to the still ongoing Covid-situation all over the world and the resulting travel restrictions, the first SIMONA training event was held entirely online, on 25th March 2021. Since the topic of this first training event is sampling, we wished for a physical meeting with a live demonstration of sampling of different media. However, the core group for this training event prepared a demonstration film for sampling methods according to the SIMONA sampling protocol. In addition, we had a series of lectures, such as the general framework for sediment sampling, sample handling, sediment quality evaluation methods, presentation of case studies from Drava, Upper Tissa, and South Danube test area, and fruitful discussions. The Training programme is reachable on this link: http://www.interreg-danube.eu/uploads/media/approved_project_public/0001/43/31d1cb665ea107d653020bb055e6f09c83f98d1b.pdf

This training event addressed all SIMONA experts involved in sampling as well as interested national target groups outside of SIMONA, who are active or interested in harmonized sampling methods. We are grateful to say that we gathered 72 participants to the meeting, and had around 80 registered. Almost all partners and their associated partners were present, together with multiple external experts that added valuable contributions.

SIMONA - SAMPLING VIDEO SHOOTING ACTION IN THE FIELD



From 3rd to 5th March the SIMONA “Sampling video shooting” event was organized on the behalf of our scientific coordinator dr. Gyozo Jordan, with the help of his associates dr. Zsofia Kovacs (HU-OVF) and Peter Szabo (MATE). The event was initiated by the AT-AIT partner (dr. Edith Haslinger), the leader of WP7 – Trainings work package, to prepare the video material for the 1st SIMONA Training event.



The participants were the members of the Drava Test Area group (HR-HGI-CGS, MATE and SI-GEOZS PPs), our ASP PP (HU-OVF), our external expert from the EEA (Environment Agency Austria), the members of the Balint Analitika Team and the Hungarian videographer, chosen by the responsible AIT partner for the recording services. The recording of different techniques of sediment sampling took place 2 whole days in the field. The chosen site was also one of the Drava Test Area sampling sites; the location on river Baboscai/Rinya near Babosca village. The main purpose of this 3-day action was to film and develop the “visual sampling protocol”/ “field sampling manual” to present at the project's 1st Training event on sediment sampling. The final

complete video will show all the details of the sampling campaign, such as sample transfer and storage, efficient equipment arrangement in the field car, tools checklist, tools engineering details (material, assemblage, cleaning, maintenance, etc.), field sheet writing, safety, how and what not to do, sampling theory, objective of sampling for regular (surveillance) sediment quality monitoring, etc. The final video, therefore, will be in a modular form: each part such as the various sampling systems, field sheet, tools, etc. will be organised in independent small video movies.

SIMONA - SIMONA EXTENSION AND UPGRADE PROPOSAL APPROVED/ SCOM MEETING FOR P6

On the 3rd of February 2021, the Monitoring Committee of the Danube Programme approved the request for SIMONA project modification: extension and upgrade. The project extension was requested due to the untoward effect – a 6-month delay - of the COVID pandemics to the planned implementation of the important project activities, such as the Test Area and DRB Baseline sediment sampling and laboratory analysis. Since the COVID situation affected most of the 2nd call project in its` planned development, the MA/JS committee offered a possibility of project extension and upgrade with additional funding for ERDF partners. With the approval of the requested project modification (extension and upgrade), the additional period (period 7) and work package (WP8) was added to the SIMONA project. Therefore, the original end date was expanded for 6 months (from 31.5. to 30.11.2021.) and 2 additional project activities have been added in the frame of WP8. Based on these facts, the new SIMONA timeline was developed and presented to project partners in the form of a Gant Chart.

The mentioned project changes were primarily presented to partners during the online SCOM meeting for Period 6, held on 19th February 2021 via GoToMeeting. Among other news was mentioned the integration of the HU-NARIC partner into HU-SZIE which was renamed HU-MATE (the University of Agriculture and Life Sciences). As regularly at the SCOM meetings, the Lead Partner provided an overview of the general project status,

then the remaining project activities and their distribution in periods 6 and 7; presentation of the new SIMONA Gant Chart which included the explanation of the additional activities (WP8) and the financial status; financial changes in relation to the mentioned project modification

SIMONA - PROJECT PROLONGATION AND UPGRADE PROPOSAL FOR 2021 (2ND CALL PROJECTS)



Due to the Coronavirus circumstances in 2020, the DTP office released a guideline for the extension stage of 2nd call projects, which also encompasses the possibility of project upgrade with additional funds. The SIMONA project management team applied for this procedure and by the end of December 2020 submitted the prolongation and upgrade proposal for 2021 to the MA/JS committee, according to the prescribed committee rules and recommendations. The new project's end would be November 2021 instead of May 2021 and the project would be supplemented with 2 new additional activities of the scientific and management/promotion content. The final decision for approval is expected in January 2021.

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